How to / Trackmania / User appearance / Cars

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Introduction

Surely you've seen cars drive around on a server which were not made by Nadeo.

You can see DTM race cars, classic sports cars or even absurd objects like wheel chairs, UFOs or ladybugs on wheels... all these non-Nadeo vehicles are "custom cars"...

If you feel your individuality is screaming for a custom car, go on reading.

3 facts about "Custom Cars"

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→ A "**Custom Car**" is a **.zip archive**, potentially containing a 3D geometry model of the vehicle, several skin textures and some sounds. If Trackmania finds custom data about a car's element in the .zip archive, it will use this particular custom data instead of Nadeo's default data.
→ Driving physics are fixated within the game engine and not influenced by these files...
→► For transfering your custom car to other people, Locators can be used.

Foreword: Using custom cars online

P2P upload/download must be enabled (► TM launcher / Configure / Advanced / PeertoPeer), no matter if you want to transfer your car zips directly or if you use locators.
Of course your firewall/router must also allow the transfer to the outside.

www.mania-creative.com/load/

In **Trackmania Forever** you need an **upgraded account** (**Trackmania United**) for making your locally used custom cars visible to other players in the global network.

Section 1: How Trackmania assembles cars

First you need to get a rough idea, how your car is actually assembled by your Trackmania Game.

You might think, the car you use is just 1 big file, but that's not correct... A car is assembled from many different pieces of data...

Usually your Trackmania catches the different data files from **different folders** of the game installation on-the-fly while you play the game.

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Section 2: A custom car zip archive

Instead of letting Trackmania collect all the data from different locations, you can put all the important files into **1 zip archive** and chose it as "your car" in the player's profile menu.

A **fully loaded zip archive** with (almost) all necessary data for a car would look like this (right picture)... containing lots of media files for all sorts of things related to your car.

The **file size** of this zip archive would cause you some serious trouble.

Even with using locators for your zip archive, transferring this huge amount of data to 20 or 30 players on an online server wouldn't work within a reasonable amount of time.

But Trackmania isn't stupid. Trackmania will first try to use all **files** in the **zip archive** to assemble a car, and then afterwards try to **collect all other necessary files** from its own data folders.

Name	Größe
..	
Details.dds	1.398.256
DetailsDirty.dds	1.398.256
Diffuse.dds	1.398.256
DiffuseDirty.dds	1.398.256
EngineFast.ogg	55.673
EngineLow.ogg	111.318
EngineMid.ogg	87.592
EngineRev.ogg	94.650
Horn.wav	255.610
Icon.dds	11.064
Illum.dds	174.904
Mainbody.Solid.Gbx	88.448
MainbodyHigh.Solid.Gbx	1.060.294
ProjShad.dds	174.904

Conclusion
That means, that you only have to insert files into the zip archive, which are different from the default/original files in Trackmania's own resource folders. This will save you lots of time working on the zip, and will keep it nice and small...

Section 3: 3D car models

A 3D car model is a complex geometrical object, made in a 3D drawing program and then converted to Nadeo's own file container format, GBX. Often enough it's not a real car, but some really odd vehicle, like a wheelchair, a ladybug on wheels or

www.mania-creative.com/howto/tm_general_locators/index.php

people get the wildest ideas about the vehicles they want to drive :-)

We'll work with a replika 3D model of the **Stadium Car** instead to show our case...

Mainbody.Solid.Gbx and **MainbodyHigh.Solid.Gbx** represent the 3D car model in a custom car zip archive.

Both show the same vehicle, just with less/more geometrical details.
Trackmania will use one of the files, depending on the user's graphic settings.

CLICK IMAGE TO ZOOM

Does it make sense to add THIS car model files to the zip ?
A good question. After all, Trackmania already has this car model integrated in its own installation folders.

In Trackmania it **could make sense**, but only, if you'd intend to use this 3D model **outside of its "natural" environment** (Stadium).

Example 1

If you wanted to use this 3D model in the **Snow environment**, you'd have to insert the 2 Gbx files into the zip (along with necessary textures), and place the zip archive here:
..\My documents\TrackMania\Skins\Vehicles\SnowCar\

Reason: If Trackmania United would find a custom car .zip file without the 2 Gbx files in this directory, it would naturally add the Snow car 3D model while assembling the car.

Example 2

If you wanted to use this 3D model for **all environments**, you'd have to insert the 2 Gbx files into the zip (along with necessary textures), and place the zip archive here:
..\My documents\TrackMania\Skins\Vehicles\Carcommon\

Reason: If Trackmania United would find a custom car zip file without the 2 Gbx files in this directory, it wouldn't know what model it should add, because the "Carcommon" stands for "All environments"...

However, as soon as the 3D model is **not a standard car model** (which Trackmania could automatically add from its own data resources), the 2 Gbx files must always be put in the zip archive anyway.

How to build/import a custom 3D car model for Trackmania

I hoped you would never ask this ^^
Of course it's possible to produce a totally custom 3D object in your favourite 3D construction program and import them to your Trackmania Game.

But this matter is really complicated and requires some extensive knowledge about 3D modelling. If you're really hot about this topic, you can start reading yourself into the matter here:

Trick's tutorial (English) *UPDATE*
Trackmania Carpark Tutorial (French)
Deepsilver Forum (German)
Taolung's tutorial (German)
TM-Community (English)
Maybe we can offer you some comprehensive tutorial one day here on this site...

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